



Ryan White Title I HIV Health Services Planning Council

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PLANNING COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Monday, November 8, 2004
4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Area Agency on Aging/Care Directions
1366 E. Thomas Rd.

Approved

The following provides a written summary of the minutes recorded. To listen to the official recorded minutes, contact Planning Council Support. The tape(s) will be provided for review.

MEMBERS, GUESTS and STAFF

Present: Marc Allan, Erica Avery, Michelle Barker, James Bryant, Marti Cutler, Debby Elliott, Randall Furrow, Kimberly Bickes (alt. for Deborah Frusciano), Barr Jenkins, Mark Kezios, Helen Lansche, Eric Moore, John Murray, Stephen O'Dell, Tara Radke, James Reed, Larry Stähli, Maclovía Zepeda (alt. For Louie Tapia), Keith Thompson, Cynthia Trottier, Clarence Tucker, David Paquette (alt. For Jonathan Weisbuch), John Wynant, Terri Leija (alt. For Mary Rose Wilcox), John Sapero, Ellissa Babasick, Kevin McNeal, Miranda Graves, Sharyn Grayson, Sylvia Gallegos, Philip Seeger, Matthew Heil, Erica Ferguson, Amy Edmond, Bruce Porter, Glen Spencer, George Garcia

Excused: Bob Baily, Fran Garrett, Nova Lawson, Carol Williams

Absent: Donna Bryant, Juan Carrasco, Damon Gunn, Greg Levendoski

WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS, and INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

Mark Kezios called the meeting to order at approximately 4:05 p.m. He welcomed everybody and asked everyone to introduce him/her self.

DETERMINE QUORUM

Quorum was established at 4:18 pm.

ADMINISTRATIVE AGENT UPDATE

The Administrative Agent (AA) discussed the services that were affected when AIDS Project Arizona (APAZ) closed. Request For Proposals (RFPs) for the next grant year are out for African-American Outreach, Food Services and Emergency Client Assistance. For the current grant year, the four APAZ food service subcontractors are now directly contracted to provide service. He thanked his staff for working to ensure a quick, seamless transition for these services. MSM Targeted Outreach, Emergency Client Assistance and Educational Services will be provided by the County for the remainder of the grant year. He discussed he will be approaching the Allocations Committee shortly to have un-expendable funds reallocated, and thanked service organizations for helping to ensure that APAZ clients were quickly transitioned into programs at other agencies.

David also related that the grant application is due the next day, and his office is completing final revisions. He thanked providers for working quickly to provide necessary information in order to meet the grant deadline.

John Wynant asked how emergency client financial services were being transitioned. The Administrative Agent reiterated that this service was going in-house (to the County) for the remainder of the grant year and would be contracted again in the next year.

Mark Kezios thanked the Administrative Agent, the County and all the service providers for their efforts.

PLANNING COUNCIL CHAIR'S LETTER OF ASSURANCE

Mark Kezios discussed that the Chair's Letter of Assurance, dated October 15, was brought to the Executive Board's attention, and discussed at great length, at the last Executive Committee meeting. He asked the Administrative Agent to discuss the point value of the letter in the grant. The AA related that the section that included this letter was worth 15 points out of 100 possible points, and this was a competitive part of the grant.

The AA was asked what the other parts of the section were. He related that the section included the Planning Council Chair's Letter of Assurance, a description of the Allocations process, and a discussion of the Assessment of the Administrative Mechanism.

Mark related that the opinion of the Executive Board was that this draft of the letter would cause harm and a potential loss of funding to people living with HIV in our EMA. He related that consumers at the meeting voiced that they were

afraid that they would not receive meds or services. One consumer had stated that he was thinking about moving out of the EMA because he was concerned about funding shortages.

Michelle Barker discussed that she opposed the letter because she felt that it was not true; not that it would just cost the EMA money. James Bryant related that he felt that parts of the document were true.

Mark continued that, after discussion with the Board of Supervisors and the Department of Public Health, the Chair had submitted another draft on November 3rd.

Clarification was asked as to what was stated that was felt to be untrue. Mark related that the second paragraph discusses that the conditions of award were not addresses in accordance with HRSA – the Executive Committee felt that this statement was incorrect. The AA concurred, discussing that there are no “HRSA/HAB directives” as stated in the letter – there are policies and law that were indeed followed.

Michelle discussed the text of the HRSA guidance, and compared the letter to this guidance. She related that the guidance discusses the priority & allocation setting, which the Chair says was not correctly done, but that the Executive Committee felt was completed correctly. Mark also related that the entire Planning Council voted on the process, the procedures and the allocations that were determined without issue.

John Murray asked for clarification about who had written the current draft. It was related that the Planning Council Chair wrote it.

Michelle Barker discussed that the Council Chair was not at the Allocations meetings and could not accurately comment on the process. The meeting minutes, which are the only public record, show that the committee did follow the service categories and procedures as written in the Allocations Committee guidelines.

Mark Kezios related that this discussion was to let the Council know about the letter and what has transpired, but that the letter could not be changed – it must come from the Chair. He discussed there may or may not be another version.

It was related that Supervisor Wilcox felt that if this letter was what Donna believed, she was satisfied with this letter. Supervisor Wilcox does not want Donna to write something she does not feel is true.

It was asked if the November 3rd letter was damaging, and if there were members who felt it was incorrect.

A guest asked if the Chair had been contacted about the letter. It was related that both the Vice-Chair and Planning Council Support had tried to reach the Chair, but that she had not responded. The Administrative Agent related that he and the Chair had discussed the last draft, and she had suggested she would send another revision. He had not received it as of the meeting.

Stephen O'Dell discussed that the EMA should submit the most competitive grant we can, and this was very discouraging.

The AA was asked about the effect of the letter on the grant. He related that it was part of the competitive award, and he would hope to get every point possible.

There was general discussion as to whether the letter answered all of the questions, if the Acting Chair could submit the letter in her absence, or what other actions could be taken. It was related that only the Chair could submit the letter, that HRSA was aware of the issues surrounding the letter, and that this discussion was to inform the membership about what was said in the letter.

Mark Kezios encouraged anyone who could contact the Chair to do so and talk to her about her comments in the letter.

It was asked if the issues stated in the letter could be countered in the application body. It was related that there were page constraints for the grant and this would not be possible.

Keith Thompson discussed that the letter relates that the Needs Assessment information was provided after the allocations process was completed. He related that this suggests to the Feds that the committee did not look at EPI data, service utilization data, or any other information that the committee did indeed look at. He felt this was a terrible thing for the Feds to read and was not accurate. Debby Elliott related that the Focus Group information from the Needs Assessment was shared by Dr. Valdez (the contractor) at the first Allocation Committee meeting.

Jim Reed discussed that he felt that the Council membership did reflect the EMA, contrary to what the letter said.

It was reiterated that this letter must come from the Chair, not from any other entity. The AA related that it was important that all of the components of the

application should be consistent with each other; if they didn't, the score might be penalized.

James Bryant asked how the concerns addressed in the letter would be attended to. Various members discussed that the letter was not the forum to resolve these issues.

Jim Reed discussed challenges he had with the verbiage of the letter and asked about the impact of dual letters – sending an additional letter from the Council. The AA related that he had no knowledge of the possibilities, and that an additional letter would require removing valuable information from the grant.

A consumer discussed that she was profoundly disheartened. She discussed that this didn't just happen this week, the Council must have seen this coming, and must have known that there was this kind of disparity. The fallout is someone is going to die, and she wondered how important these arguments are going to be. The Council has a problem that needs to be addressed, and you have consumers whose lives depend on this. This is a frightening situation for a consumer who is depending on the Council for their life. She expressed she was ready to move out of the EMA.

Debby Elliott discussed that there were members of the Council who have worked all summer and fall to try and bring some resolution to this issue. She agreed with the guest and expressed distress. She thought that someone purposely working to reduce the amount of money coming into this community, based on things that most of us know not to be true, is unconscionable. She felt that because somebody wants to get their agenda across to the Federal government and potentially cost this EMA money, when everybody is working so hard, is beyond destructive.

DISCUSSION OF THE REMOVAL OF THE PLANNING COUNCIL CHAIR FROM THE COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

Mark Kezios discussed that, at the last Executive Committee meeting, the Executive Board voted to recommend the memorandum provided to the committee (attached) in support of a motion to remove the Chair from Council membership. Terri Leija added that this motion was to remove the Chair from the Planning Council membership – there was no process to just remove her as Chair.

John Murray asked if the document went to everyone on the Council. It was related that the document was submitted at the Executive Committee meeting

and had been forwarded to the Council membership via email on September 22nd.

Eric Moore discussed that the document had a reference to a section of the Bylaws that was renumbered when the Bylaws were approved by the Board of Supervisors (BOS) at their last meeting.

Marc Allan discussed that if another member were to be as absent as Ms. Bryant has been, they would have voluntarily resigned without recourse. This is not discussed in the document. He liked Donna; it is not an issue of personalities. He discussed that the issue is there are people who are going to see services disappear.

Jim Reed discussed that in eight years, this is the first time he has seen a grant application compromised by the actions of the Chair - potentially losing hundreds of thousands of dollars in care services because of actions taken by a Chair who is not at the meeting to defend herself. He related he was one of the people who was looking for every alternative to where we are right now, and tried to solve the issue diplomatically, but every time he tried he was pushed away. He asked if we needed a motion for the issue. This was confirmed.

John Murray discussed that the Council and the community needed to proactively look for other ways to fund service organizations. Eric related that service providers did this, but the point is that there are over six million dollars that is earmarked to provide services, and if some of this is gone, it will affect care for clients. John Murray reiterated the need to find additional funding sources.

MOTION: Cynthia Trottier motioned to vote on recommending the removal of the Planning Council Chair from the Council membership. An unidentifiable member seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION: Glen Spencer related that in the last three months, when making difficult funding decisions, the Chair has not been present. He felt that removing the Chair was the first step toward doing something proactive. He supported the decision.

James Bryant asked about the process. In response, Terri Leija quoted the Bylaws section addressing the action (Article IV, section 9).

OUTCOME: The motion passed.

It was discussed that, based on her lack of attendance, and the fact that a fax of her final draft letter came from Denver, she may not even be living in the EMA. This would disqualify her from being a member.

There was discussion about who would draft and sign the letter. It was related that Planning Council Support would draft the letter, and that the Vice-Chair would approve it. It was requested to include the memorandum document with the letter. There was additional discussion about where and how it would be sent to the Chair; PCS related it would be FedEx'd and emailed to the addresses the Chair has provided.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Eric Moore discussed that the HIV Law Project will be having a yard sale on Saturday, November 13th, starting at 6:00 am. Also, several agencies have joined together to have a food drive to gather food items for clients who are in transition from APAZ's closing. He provided a handout with drop-off locations.

Additionally, Eric discussed that longtime activist and former Planning Council member Caesar Perez passed away last Friday. He will provide information about the service arrangements when they are available.

Debby Elliott discussed that Care Directions will be having a bake sale on the morning of November 18th. Debby also discussed that there is a reduction of transportation services, because of so many people are accessing the service. Cab services to education and group events are being limited to keep services for medical needs available to all those who need it. She implored people who are arranging events to be mindful to schedule them at a location close to a bus line.

Miranda Graves discussed that there will be a Community of Color Life Walk and Candlelight Vigil on December 1st (World AIDS Day), starting at George Washington Carver Museum and ending at Patriots Park. It will start at 6:00 pm. Call Arizona OIC at 602 254-5081 for more information. They are asking every participant to donate five dollars.

James Bryant acknowledged the providers who serve African-Americans and discussed that he believes that there is a continued growth in the epidemic among African-Americans, and he was concerned about where to access more funding.

Sharyn Grayson discussed that on Friday, November 12th, there will be a meeting at Arizona OIC from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm for consumers. It is for consumers to come, get information, have questions answered and have someone to talk to.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at approximately 5:45 pm.